

+ COMMUNITY SUPPORTS AND HEALTH SERVICES

WE ENVISION...

...A Boston that offers health care and support services in accessible locations, including in home, with staff that are culturally and linguistically matched to the older resident's needs.

...A Boston that recognizes the specific needs of Boston residents living with dementia, their family members and their caregivers, and creates supportive communities that promote quality of life within these populations.

WE HEARD...

- Older adults want better access to good quality food they can afford.
- One-quarter of survey respondents are dissatisfied with the availability of affordable, quality food.
- Education is needed about available services, especially among those who are isolated.

WE HEARD:

“As I become less mobile, I am concerned about my access to services.”

– BOSTON RESIDENT

“I enjoy living in the city close to supermarkets, pharmacies, and all. I can be more independent than if I lived in the outskirts of town, where I would have to depend on my personal transportation to run errands.”

– BOSTON RESIDENT



- The most often mentioned recommendation related to community supports and health services was further investment in education about options for senior care.
- Residents with dementia and other long-term conditions need better access to services and supports.
- One out of four survey respondents who have a disabling condition are dissatisfied with their access to physical and mental health services.

WE ARE...

Improving Connection and Information

The Commission partners with organizations across the city who form Boston’s aging network, a series of providers who create a comprehensive community care system for older adults and their caregivers through a mixture of federal, state, city and private funding. To help older adults and their caregivers connect to this network, Commission staff are trained to offer specialized information and referral (I&R) services and work hand in hand at this task with our I&R community partner, Boston Elder Info. Over the past two years, the Elderly Commission trained nine staff members as SHINE (Serving the Health Information Needs of Everyone) counselors. With this training, they are able to provide important counseling, free health insurance information and assistance to people on Medicare and their caregivers.

Building Blocks for a Dementia-Friendly Boston

Since 2014, the City of Boston has partnered with the Alzheimer’s Association to raise awareness about the disease through events like the annual Alzheimer’s Walk. Over the past two years, with the help of the Alzheimer’s Association, all first responders (Police, Fire, EMS) were trained to understand dementia and learn how to approach and communicate with people who have the disease.

In collaboration with Boston Centers for Youth and Families Grove Hall Senior Center, the Commission is also leading the city’s first *memory café*, “Thanks for the Memories,” giving people with dementia and their care partners a safe space to gather and connect. Attendees can engage in artistic and cultural activities, such as “Meet me at the Movies,” a program where classic film clips are shown to spark thoughts and memories.

KEYWORDS:
MEMORY CAFÉ: Informal gathering of people with dementia and their caregivers to share resources and receive support. Concept originated in Europe.

WE WILL...

Recommendation #1:

Promote outreach to support services and access to benefits, and focus on reaching seniors who are isolated.

- **Action Item A:** We will encourage the Commission’s Title III funded organizations to adopt new outreach and marketing approaches to better reach Boston older adults. New approaches may include: partnering with local libraries or community centers to market programs and services, posting notices in grocery stores, sending information out with staff members who visit older adults’ homes, or using social media or robo-calls to reach older adults and their families.
- **S Action Item B:** We will build relationships with faith based organizations to specifically target and provide support to socially isolated elders at risk.
- **S D Action Item C:** We will develop a working group to identify strategies to reach isolated seniors with the goal of preventing crises, creating more positive outcomes.
- **E Action Item D:** We will place additional emphasis on assisting older adults to access public benefits including increasing benefits outreach and developing a comprehensive system for tracking benefits enrollment and retention.
- **S Action Item E:** We will identify areas of Boston with the highest concentrations of older adult residents and go door to door to ensure that they are connected to information and resources.
- **D Action Item F:** We will continue to

identify and pursue opportunities to raise awareness about Alzheimer’s Disease information and resources.

Recommendation #2:

Ensure that older adults have access to high quality, affordable food.

- **Action Item A:** We will identify areas with limited food resources and utilize the City’s Senior Shuttle to transport seniors to grocery stores with affordable, healthy food.
- **E Action Item B:** We will educate older adults about options for improving their access to food, including but not limited to, availability of delivery service options, pop up mobile markets, food benefits like SNAP and Bounty Bucks, and congregate and home delivered meals programs.
- **Action Item C:** We will explore options for increasing access to nutrient dense foods and goods by reducing mobility and transportation barriers.
- **Recommendation #3:** Enhance older adults’ safety through education.
- **D Action Item A:** We will convene a group to explore current processes for intervention for people with dementia who have wandering behaviors and identify ways to improve current protocols and communication to improve risk management.
- **Action Item B:** We will continue to collaborate with community partners who are experts on fraud, elder abuse and financial exploitation to raise awareness warning signs and avenues for assistance. We will consider multiple methods, including the City’s communication channels, local television and community newspapers, to spotlight these resources.